UNITED NATIONS **E**

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1999/130
23 March 1999

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-fifth session
Agenda items 9, 14 (b) and 14 (c)

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD

SPECIFIC GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS: MINORITIES; MASS EXODUSES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

Letter dated 19 March 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights

I have the honour to transmit, enclosed herewith*, the text entitled "Current situation on refugees in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia". I would like to ask you to have it published as an official document of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights under provisional agenda items 9, 14 (b) and 14 (c).

(Signed): Branko BRANKOVIĆ
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

---

* The annex is reproduced as received in the language of submission only.

The current situation on refugees in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

1. As an outcome of the civil war and the policy of the leaderships in BiH and Croatia, 700.000 refugees and displaced persons found refuge in the FR of Yugoslavia, mostly in Serbia. Out of that number, 80.000 persons were placed in 700 refugee centers whereas the others went to their relatives' and friends', themselves already too worn out by long-lasting economic sanctions the international community imposed to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

2. After termination of the UN mandate in Eastern Slavonia - Srem and Baranja region (and its "integration" into the Republic of Croatia on 15 January 1999), 60.000 new refugees from this region fled to the Republic of Serbia, women and children mostly. All these persons were granted the refugee status in Serbia along with the right to accommodation although the UNHCR did not consider them as refugees.

3. Out of that number and up to 1 March 1999, 1.191 persons were repatriated to Croatia by the UNHCR, whereas 1.861 persons were reunited with their families through the Office for Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, which makes that the total number of repatriated refugees and displaced persons amounts to 3.052.

4. Since 1992, the International Organisation for Migration (ICM) and the UNHCR contributed in large part to 33.000 persons going to third countries.

5. Refugees and displaced persons with their status in order benefit full health care protection, free education and social care (for persons mentally and physically handicapped), whereas women refugees-mothers with newborn infants in exile benefit maternity allowance, as all unemployed mothers in the FR of Yugoslavia. According to the Law on Refugees adopted in 1992 by the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, refugees have the right to take up employment for a definite or indefinite period of time. Refugees can learn about their rights through public media or directly through contact with local representatives of the Commissioner for Refugees in municipalities they inhabit. Also, refugees publish a magazine dealing with this particular issue.

6. Funds necessary for the accommodation of refugees are covered by the republican and federal budget, whereby these allocations amount to 5% of gross national product.

7. Despite the assistance provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the European Council Humanitarian Office and other donors, the number of which is constantly decreasing, the humanitarian assistance, provided in such a way, makes up for only 15% of the needs of refugees.

8. Except for the particular care provided to women, children (150.000 to 18 years of age) and the elderly, which are the most vulnerable categories

among refugees, the Commissioner for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia in its work pays particular attention to the lasting solution of the refugees issue.

9. It is necessary that the international community attach greater importance to this serious humanitarian issue, in view of the fact that, due to the large number of refugees and difficult economic situation, the FR of Yugoslavia will not be able to provide shelter to refugees in an appropriate way.